

the truth. Carrying out criticism does not mean blaming one another or insulting each other's honor. Instead, we must do it in such a way as to reflect the lofty human character and the pure sentiments of like-minded people. Criticism and self-criticism must be carried out regularly from the lowest to the highest levels and vice versa under appropriate formats and measures.

4. We must cultivate cadres and ensure that only honest and competent cadres are named for key positions at various levels. As leading cadres who hold very important positions and who serve as a hub for unity and unanimity within the party, they must have appropriate ethics, qualities, and abilities. Experience shows that disunity will inevitably arise once members of a leadership organ lack unanimity, turn their back toward one another, adopt an uncooperative attitude, and speak ill of one another.

In addition, we must attach importance to the building of clean and steadfast grassroots party organizations and must improve the leadership role, the militancy, and the responsibility of party organizations and party members in the building and strengthening of the unity and unanimity within the party. We must build a collective where members truly understand one another, respect and trust one another, love one another, and assist one another in achieving mutual progress and jointly fulfilling the party's tasks.

Meanwhile, as the party is a ruling party, we must strive to: gradually perfect our laws; increase the party's control and supervision by the people; and build and perfect the system that advocates scrupulous enforcement of the principles of democratic centralism. Only through this will we be able to prevent indications of disunity. If disunity occurs, we must promptly avert and deal with it without allowing it to drag on.

5. Experience obtained from efforts to overcome the ills of disunity in a number of localities over the years shows that it is vital to correctly find out the causes of the disunity. Meanwhile, we must deal promptly and sternly with those cadres responsible for disunity, depending on the extent of their violations and in accordance with reasonable principles. With the motto of "Curing the Diseases to Save the Patients," we must strive to educate those with ideas of disunity. We must resort to organizational penalty actions if they refuse to respond. We must resolve to promptly replace those cadres causing disunity, to quickly replenish and recommend promotion for those cadres with good revolutionary qualities and ethics and the ability to promote unity among personnel, and to supervise the enforcement of party lines and resolutions.

To carry out the renovation process and the cause of industrialization and modernization successfully — the aim of which is to make the people prosperous, the country strong, and the society civilized — our party and people must now more than ever before preserve and foster the tradition of unity and unanimity within the party, ensure adequate democratic principles for party activities, accelerate the carrying out of criticism and self-criticism in an honest and straightforward fashion, love one another as like-minded people, bravely struggle against individualism, departmentalism, localism, opportunism, and all indications of nepotism within the party. Preserving unity and unanimity within the party is a lofty responsibility and the obligation of various party organizations as well as of party cadres and members from the central down to local levels. As advised by President Ho Chi Minh, we must preserve unity and unanimity within the party as if it were the apple of our eye.

SRV: Comments on Party's Firm Stand on Marxism-Leninism

963E0006B Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN
in Vietnamese Sep 95 No 11, pp 31-36

[Article by Nguyen Phu Trong, professor at the Institute of History]

[FBIS Translated Text] Recently, in the face of the collapse of realistic socialism in the Soviet Union and East Europe, ideologists who oppose communism and socialism have rushed to criticize and attack Marxism-Leninism in an attempt to shake our ideological foundations and push us out of the socialist orbit. In our country, not counting those people who have a desire to study and build but whose views need to be discussed, there are a small number of people who for various reasons have accepted the views of the enemy and who have openly criticized Marxism-Leninism and criticized the party for adhering firmly to Marxism-Leninism and choosing the socialist path. They have written various documents, distributed these among themselves, or distributed them outside the country using newspapers, stations, and publishing houses having an anticommunist bias. They have attacked Marxism-Leninism using very harsh and vicious language.

From criticizing Marxism-Leninism, some people have leveled accusations against Ho Chi Minh, saying that he was wrong to bring Marxism-Leninism into Vietnam and that that is the reason for the "darkness, sluggishness, and pain in our country." They have demanded that our party "reject Marxism-Leninism before it is too late" and said that "more than anyone, the CPV should acknowledge the mistakes made by the party" and "bravely

renovate politics in an all-round and thorough manner." "If the CPV stubbornly clings to the old path, it will meet with failure and collapse and be cursed by history."

The political attitudes of these people are quite clear and straightforward. Those who speak up in defense of Marxism-Leninism are branded as "dogmatic, conservative, and obsequious" and as "people clinging to their positions." Whenever leaders try to correct things, they claim that they are "oppressing those people who hold opposing political views" and "stifling democratic rights and freedom of thought." Some have thoughtlessly said that the reason why our party is adhering firmly to Marxism-Leninism is that the party's leadership echelons are "chained by the classical principles of Marxism-Leninism." Or they say that this is because the party echelons are "confused" by the present situation and that for the sake of "psychological stability" and to "flatter the masses," they have to make revolutionary statements.

Is that the truth? We must be on guard against the aggressive attitude and ill-will of a number of people. Let's discuss a number of the main arguments raised by people concerning this issue.

1. Those who criticize Marxism-Leninism usually look for a way to deny the scientific nature of Marxism-Leninism and prove that Marx, Engels, and Lenin were not scientists. They claim that "Marxism is just an illusory concept," "a conceptual lie," and "a disguised play" and that it is "filled with illusions." Lenin promoted those illusions. "Marx and Lenin were idealistic, metaphysical, and utopian sociologists. Marxism-Leninism is an 'illusion.'"

This is a very cynical misrepresentation of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. In the past, perhaps few dared voice such derogatory views and now those who oppose Marx and Lenin have gone crazy. People can criticize Marx on this and that, hate Marx, and oppose him strongly because he declared war on capitalism and stood up for the working class, but no one can deny that Marx and Engels were scientists. Because in reality, Marx and Engels were great and talented scientists. They were "geniuses" of mankind. The theories of these two men were the result of very strict scientific studies and impressive scientific projects that answered many questions posed by man. Inheriting the wonderful ideological currents of mankind up to the 19th Century (German philosophy, English political economics, and French socialism) and summarizing realities in their own age, Marx and Engels created a solid and accurate theory in which a highly scientific nature was united

with a revolutionary spirit. The great contributions by Marx and Engels were:

First, these two men defended and developed materialism, created the theory of dialectical materialism and historical materialism, created a fundamental turning point in philosophy, and provided man with a new way of looking at things and a strong weapon with which to understand and transform the world. The historical materialism of Marx, which is a great achievement of scientific thought, discovered the laws of social development and the necessity of moving from this socioeconomic form to a higher socioeconomic form.

Second, relying on the achievements of classical political economics, Marx and Engels created a new economic theory and brought about a real revolution in political economics. With the discovery of the law of surplus value, Marx discovered the means of capitalist exploitation and advanced a scientific argument concerning the necessary death of capitalism and the necessary victory of socialism.

Third, through analyzing and dissecting capitalism, Marx and Engels discovered its laws of movement and development and, based on this, made predictions concerning the development of society in the future and pointed out that the social force with the ability to become the creator of the new society was the working class led by the communist party. The working class must wage a difficult revolutionary struggle in order to topple capitalism. Class struggle is the motive force for development in a class society. Thus, Marxist socialism is scientific socialism and is completely different from the utopian socialism in France in the past.

In 1872 in the May 1872 edition of EUROPEAN COMMUNICATOR, the Russian economist I. I. Kaufman [Cau-pho-man] observed that Marx was a very realistic and dialectical man. He was more realistic and dialectical than anyone before him. "When proving the necessity of the current order, he proved the necessity of a different order. The present order must shift regardless of whether people believe this or whether people have a concept of this." [Footnote 1] Marx and Engels, "Selected Works," Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1982, volume 3, pages 206, 207

Lenin made the following observation on the nature of Marxism: "After studying the laws of development of human society, Marx understood that developed capitalism will necessarily lead to communism and—this is the fundamental point—when proving this truth, Marx relied on very accurate and detailed studies of capitalist society and on fully grasping everything provided by science up to that time." [Footnote 2]

Lenin, "Collected Works," Progress Publishing House, Moscow, 1978, volume 41, page 361

Even bourgeois thinkers have great respect for Marx and have studied Marxism very carefully. In reality, this has helped capitalism adjust a number of its operating methods and formulas. Recently, the well-known French philosopher Jacques Derrida affirmed that "Marx was a thinker of the 21st Century." And yet some of our "scholars" stubbornly insist that Marx was a deluded idealist.

And Lenin? Lenin is famous as a scholar and fighter for social progress. He had a great influence on the development of the culture and science of his time. Lenin tied science and culture to the progressive social and political forces of the 20th Century. As a scholar, Lenin made many contributions and explained many questions having to do with philosophy, political economics, history, the natural sciences, logic, jurisprudence, and sociology. Lenin not only applied Marxism but also supplemented and developed Marxism. He was engrossed in his work and carried out his work with unusual energy and with a very scientific spirit. (To write the work "The Growth of Capitalism in Russia," Lenin read and studied 583 books.) Lenin showed great intelligence in reviewing realities. As a result of reviewing realities, he wrote "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism." Thanks to reviewing realities, Lenin changed his initial views on socialism and produced the well-known New Economic Plan (NEP). It's not surprising that communists referred to Leninism as "Marxism during the time of imperialism and proletarian revolution" and linked Leninism to Marxism to form Marxism-Leninism. Nor is it surprising that Lenin's theories have had a great influence throughout the world. Based on statistical data of UNESCO, Lenin's works have been translated into 120 languages and are the most widely read books in the world, surpassing even Tolstoy, Shakespeare, and Balzac.

In short, Marxism-Leninism is a science. Above all, it is a dialectic and modern science concerning the laws of development of nature and society, the revolution by the oppressed and exploited masses, and the victory of socialism and communism. The great value of Marxism-Leninism lies in its scientific integrity and its comprehensive, systematic, and dialectic nature aimed at liberating laborers and freeing society from the yoke of oppression and exploitation and all forms of corruption and bringing about a just and humanitarian society.

With its soul being the law of dialectical materialism, with its economic foundation being the theory of surplus value, having made great discoveries concerning histor-

ical materialism, the basic elements of which are the theory of economic and social structure and the historical role of the working class, Marxism-Leninism is still the peak of human intelligence and an accurate and complete science that can never be replaced. Even though it may be necessary to supplement, develop, and further perfect this (this is a necessity), the basic contents of Marxism-Leninism are still correct in today's conditions. Marxism-Leninism is still the spiritual weapon of the working class and oppressed laborers throughout the world in their struggle to free themselves. Although there are those who are intentionally trying to distort it, Marxism-Leninism is still Marxism-Leninism. It still has great vitality and value.

It's not difficult to understand why Marxism-Leninism is being attacked and cursed. People have hated and cursed Marxism-Leninism for a long time. They have been cursing Marxism for 150 years and Leninism for almost 100 years. Not only do some people have a deep hatred for Marxism-Leninism, but they are also looking for a way to destroy it. In 1913, Lenin said about Marxism: "Throughout the civilized world, Marx' theory has created powerful enemies and generated great hatred in bourgeois scientific circles. Such an attitude is to be expected, because in a society built on class struggle, there cannot be a 'proletarian' social science. To expect a proletarian science in a society built on a hired-slave system is very naive." [Footnote 3] Lenin, "Collected Works," Progress Publishing House, Moscow, 1980, volume 23, page 49

The fact that the enemy is slandering Marxism-Leninism simply proves the correctness and scientific nature of Marxism-Leninism, which is what anti-communist thinkers fear greatly. Each time it has to struggle against opposing ideological currents, Marxism-Leninism shows its great vitality. Marxism-Leninism has had to struggle not only against reactionary bourgeois ideological viewpoints but also against erroneous tendencies within the communist and international workers movements, such as the "Vuong Quoc Pho socialism" of the Lat-xan faction in Germany, the petty bourgeois socialism of the Prudong faction in France and Belgium, the right-wing opportunism of English trade union leaders, the "leftist" adventurism of German communists, the anarchy of the Bacunin faction in Russia, and bourgeois nationalism on matters of war and colonialism. And today, there are all sorts of "currents" as we all know.

Marxism-Leninism still has the power to attract and win the hearts of billions of people on this planet because of its scientific, revolutionary, and deeply humanitarian nature.

This is a very important answer to the question of why our party is adhering firmly to Marxism-Leninism and why it regards Marxism-Leninism as its ideological foundation and compass for revolutionary action.

2. Some people say that the import of Marxism-Leninism into Vietnam is the cause of our misfortunes and our country's sluggishness.

Such views are totally wrong, because they have no basis. Such views have turned white into black and distorted history. As everyone knows, our country has a strong patriotic tradition. This is the factor that has generated our people's great power in successfully resisting foreign aggression. This patriotism has existed in all periods. But reality clearly shows that only during the time of Ho Chi Minh, under the leadership of the communist party, was our people's strength able to increase and win a more complete and all-round victory. Those who want to reduce or deny the leadership role of the party and Marxism-Leninism frequently say that in the past, before the birth of the party and the existence of Marxism-Leninism, our people still defeated foreign aggressors. That's correct, but it is only half right. They forget that after defeating foreign aggression, what direction will the country take, what will be done to ensure that the people are the real masters, lead prosperous lives, and escape from a life of slavery and hardship under the oppression of feudal landlords, and what can be done to escape from the vicious circle of exploitation? Furthermore, during the past resistance against bandits, there were certain limitations concerning the strength of our nation and people. (Each age has its own historical limitations.) During the anti-French period, before we had the leadership of the communist party, our nation had many outstanding and fiercely patriotic people who had a spirit of bravery and sacrifice. Such people included Nguyen Trung Truc, Tong Duy Tan, Phan Dinh Phung, Hoang Hoa Tham, Phan Boi Chau, Phan Chu Trinh, and Nguyen Thai Hoc. Why were those movements and uprisings defeated? During the days before the party, the "situation in our country was very black." Why? Because we lacked a correct line. For 70 years, the country lacked a line to save the country and liberate the nation. Only after the birth of the CPV, when our party was able to find the correct path and satisfy the sacred wishes of the people thanks to accepting Marxism-Leninism, did our country have an opportunity to carry on national liberation in a correct way, and only then was our country's revolution able to win one victory after another.

Some people argue that several of the nearby "dragons" do not follow the path of Marxism-Leninism, but they are highly developed, their economies are growing rapidly, and the standard of living there has risen. It's

true that in today's scientific and technical revolution, there are countries that are developing very quickly. But each country has its own specific historical conditions and so simple, one-sided comparisons should not be made. In the world today, there are hundreds of capitalist countries, but only a few are developed. The great majority are not moving ahead at all. Why? Vietnam has its own geographical and historical conditions. No country in the world has had to deal with the problems that Vietnam has had to deal with. In just a short period of time, we had to repulse foreign aggressors and deal with all types of powers. Today, we must bear the very heavy burden of this: 1.1 million war dead, 600,000 war invalids, 300,000 missing people (almost all of whom were party members and communist youth union members), almost 2 million ordinary people killed by the bandits, 2 million disabled people, 2 million people affected by poisonous chemicals, and so on. And where else in the world besides Vietnam have people been able to score countless glorious victories? This includes the glorious victory of the August 1945 Revolution, which made a hole in the colonial system of imperialism, and the glorious victories scored during the nine years of resistance against France to smash the old colonialism. This also includes the victories of the 20 years of resistance against the United States to defeat neocolonialism, reunify the country, and bring the country into a new era, the era of independence, freedom, and socialism.

During the past 10 years of renovation, at a time when the world has been undergoing very complex changes and our country has faced many difficulties, our people, under the leadership of the party, have carried on renovation and scored many important achievements. To date, even though there are still many difficulties, our country's economy is growing well. Our country's economy is growing at a rate of more than 8 percent a year, quality is improving, the lives of most of the people have improved, there is political stability, and foreign relations are expanding. Our country has gotten out of its economic and social crisis and has the necessary preconditions for moving into a new period of development, a period of accelerating industrialization and modernization and integration with the region and the world. Our country has foreign relations with 155 countries (including all the great powers in the world). We have commercial relations with more than 120 countries and relations with 180 parties and 250 private organizations. Foreign direct investment (FDI) in Vietnam totals more than \$15 billion, and ODA [Official Development Assistance] loans total \$3.6 billion. In 1994, even there was heavy flooding, the entire country harvested 26.2 million tons of grain and was able to satisfy domestic grain needs and export 2 million tons of rice. Even though the food and clothing, travel,

education, customs, and way of life of the people are still not as had been hoped, there have been many changes as compared with before. Nationwide, 60.2 percent of the villages have electricity, 86.5 percent of the villages have roads, 92 percent of the villages have public health stations, 76.2 percent of the villages have Level-II schools, and so on. A number of villages in remote areas have electricity, and telephone service has reached the Cau Mau-Minh Hai area.

All ordinary people have been affected by these rapid changes. People far and near are encouraged and share the joy. Even a number of people who were once "on the other side" admit this. [Footnote 4] An example is Do Mau, a lieutenant general in the Saigon army prior to 1975, who recently mentioned the changes that have taken place in Vietnam in his memoirs and in a number of articles. See TAP CHI CONG SAN No. 10 (August) 1995.

But there are still people who are shutting their eyes and portraying today's Vietnamese society in a very black and ugly way. They are intentionally forgetting that the ones responsible for the disaster in Vietnam and for the poverty and hardships suffered by the Vietnamese people are the imperialist invaders, the colonialists who stole our country, and their lackeys.

For two-thirds of a century, the CPV has worked tirelessly and made sacrifices to gain full independence for the country, ensure the well-being of the people, and enable our country to become the equal of other countries. Armed with Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh thought and coordinating these closely with our national traditions and humanity, the party has led our people in winning great victories, enabled the country to develop, and performed many miracles during the past 50 years. That is the reality. And that is the reason why our party adheres firmly to Marxism-Leninism.

3. Some people say that the CPV has actually abandoned Marxism-Leninism and socialism but that "for the sake of face," in its official statements and documents, the party continues to state that it is adhering firmly to Marxism-Leninism. On one hand, they demand that the country "renovate thoroughly, not half-way," meaning that there must be full privatization and political pluralism. But on the other hand, they claim that the party has abandoned Marxism-Leninism and that our renovation movement is "uncoordinated" and poorly defined."

This is another slanderous and arbitrary argument. As everyone knows, the CPV has always been a real Marxist-Leninist party. The party has not only adhered steadfastly to Marxism-Leninism but also made creative use of Marxism-Leninism given our country's specific conditions. Based on reality, the party

has concluded that whenever we have strayed away from Marxism-Leninism or become dogmatic, we have suffered defeats. The reason for the success of the present renovation movement is that the party has renovated its theoretical thinking. It has a correct understanding of Marxism-Leninism and has made creative use of Marxism-Leninism. Renovation means returning to Marxism-Leninism and making creative use of Marxism-Leninism. The party's programs, lines, and policies express this idea quite clearly. The following are a few examples:

Understanding and applying the law pointed out by Marx, that is, "production relationships must be in accord with the nature and standards of the production forces," our party has put forth and led the implementation of a policy to develop a multifaceted, socialist-oriented economy that operates based on market mechanisms under the control of the state. This is regarded as a long-term strategic issue throughout the period of transition to socialism in our country. Among the economic elements, the state-operated economy must play a guiding role. State enterprises and cooperatives must be the foundation.

Thoroughly understanding and making use of Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP), we are making bold and effective use of the forms and methods of state capitalism on a broad scale (including such forms as joint public-private enterprises, joint ventures, share forms, cooperative forms, and lease forms) in order to build socialism. This is regarded as a major policy throughout the period of transition to socialism.

We are making use of and implementing the laws of commodity production (including the law of value, the law of supply and demand, the law of competition, and the law of expanded reproduction). We are using various types of markets (consumer materials markets, production materials markets, labor markets, currency markets, and so on), closely coordinating plans with markets, coordinating economic growth with social progress and fairness, and linking gaining wealth legitimately to reducing poverty and preserving our national culture.

We are making good use of and dealing with the relationship between class and nation, national and international, and economics and politics in order to create an integrated strength to gradually carry on industrialization and modernization and build and defend the fatherland.

Do these things indicate that we are moving away from Marxism-Leninism or that we are adhering to the principles and ideas of Marx and Lenin? Marxism-Leninism is and always will be a compass and a torch to light the way for our party and people.

Experience shows that if the ideological system becomes vague and there is vacillation, there will be confusion in the policies and lines and turmoil in organi

**SRV: Commentary Reviews Achievements,
Direction for New Year**

*BK2102140396 Hanoi Voice of Vietnam in English
1000 GMT 21 Feb 96*

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Vietnamese people are enthusiastically entering a new Spring—the year of the rat—and preparing for the important national event, the eighth national congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam. The coming national party congress is very important as it decides the fate of the country, creates a strong position for the development of the country to go into the next century, and even plans directions for the following century of the Vietnamese nation. Therefore, being workers in the factory or farmers in the field, combatants on a remote island, or professors of universities—and whether a party member or not—all are prepared for this event according to their abilities.

Entering this Spring, we have grounds to say that the Vietnamese boat has emerged from a storm. Though there are still dangerous coral reefs and currents around, it is the time to firmly hold the steering wheel and choose the right direction to avoid all dangers and bring the boat to wharf. It means carrying out successfully national industrialization and modernization in the spirit of independence, freedom, and socialism. It means heightening national industrialization and modernization and peaking the renovation process to a new height. State management effectiveness must be strengthened, bringing the market strategy into the corridor of socialist orientation. This is not easy because there have been no precedent. Many Westerners said Vietnam was tilting against a windmill.

The achievements recorded in the renovation process over the last 10 years show that the Vietnamese people and the Communist Party of Vietnam was strong enough to handle the market economy. The last 10 years have proved that Vietnam should take more advantage of science and technology on a large scale. Vietnam should develop its production force and increase labor productivity, while perfecting the management mechanism and transforming the economic structure into a modern method. Economic renovation was a solid policy over the last few years.

Vietnam will make strong contact with world scientific and technological achievements. The socialist-oriented state plays a role as a commander of the division in applying scientific and technological advances to

socialize production that creating a firm premise for the coming into existence of socialism. The Spring is a real national festival of Vietnamese people. All Vietnamese are trying their best to help the country move forward.

**SRV: NHAN DAN Cited on Diplomatic Successes
of 1995**

*BK2202073396 Hanoi Voice of Vietnam Network
in Vietnamese 1430 GMT 21 Feb 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the title: Welcome the New Status, an article written by Ho Vu in the special Tet edition of NHAN DAN reads: The Year of the Pig passed with numerous successes of our country in the field of foreign relations. We should first mention our relations with our three bordering neighbor countries. The friendly and time-tested relations with the Lao People's Democratic Republic are stronger than ever. After the first-in-the-year visit by the Cambodian first premier and the last-in-the-year visit of the king, the Year of the Pig can be called the Vietnam-Cambodia Year.

November has become the traditional friendship month for Vietnam and China, because for the last four years there has always been a high-ranking meeting between the two countries during this month.

The decision of the United States to normalize relations with us, was an important success, as was our admittance to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which lifted Vietnam's status in the international arena. The summit in Bangkok, Thailand, provided proof of the aspirations for peace and cooperation as the agreement to turn Southeast Asia into a nuclear weapon-free region was signed by all ten countries in the region.

Looking to the countries in the Pacific Rim, the visits of Party General Secretary Do Muoi to South Korea and Japan contributed to the development of relations between Vietnam and countries in this important region. In Europe, relations were improved by Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet's visits to North and Central Europe, and by the many reciprocal visits by honored guests to Vietnam.

In multilateral relations, we also witnessed new events. The comprehensive cooperation agreement between Vietnam and the EU has opened a new page in relations with one of the world-leading centers. We can also affirm that the Year of the Pig was a year of further exploration, with the visits of President Le Duc Anh to faraway Brazil, Cuba, Colombia, and even to the United States, who normalized relations with us after so many years of trying every way possible to subordinate us.

Our people had an opportunity to welcome the hero whose name has become a legend: Fidel, coming from a beloved island of freedom.

It is impossible to mention all the successful events of the past year, but those mentioned above highlight the multicolor joyful picture of our foreign relations. Our country has never had such wide-reaching relations: diplomatic relations with nearly 160 countries, trade ties with over 100 countries, and foreign investment from over 50 countries. Is this not obvious evidence of our new status? Our stable position does not bring only happiness, but also material benefits, specifically pledges for financial support worth \$2.3 billion, which was made at the recent conference of donor countries in Paris.

SRV: Four Strikes Staged in Ho Chi Minh City 5-7 Feb

*BK2102155496 Hanoi LAO DONG in Vietnamese
11 Feb 96 p 1*

[Report by "TMH"]

[FBIS Translated Text] There were four strikes in Ho Chi Minh City in three days from 5 to 7 February organized by workers of various companies to oppose the extended working hours and demand wage increases and bonuses for the Lunar New Year.

About 680 workers of the Ree Yong Company held a strike on 5 February to oppose the extended working hours imposed by the company's board of directors. The workers rejected the order of the company's board of director two days earlier and were investigated by the chief of each section on the instructions of the company. On the morning of 5 February when the investigation

began, the workers immediately staged a strike and demanded a stop to the investigation. They further asked for a bonus on the Lunar New Year and demanded the company's written pledge.

The second strike occurred on 6 February when 100 workers of the Sunbird Company [a 100-percent foreign invested company] stopped work to give their petition to the company's board of directors. They demanded fixed pay scales, strict implementation of the contract signed between the company and the workers, and a stop to charging annual leave for year-end holidays.

On the same day, all drivers of the Vinataxi Company held a strike to continue their struggle to demand that the company management committee and the board of directors improve the management and carry out overt control of social allowances, the fees imposed on the drivers, and the expenses for cleaning the taxis. The company's board of directors held a meeting afterward and decided to comply with some points of the drivers' demands.

The last strike occurred on 7 February when more than 360 workers of the Dai An dress-making establishment stopped work. They demanded a wage increase, a reduction in the extended working hours, and a bonus for the Lunar New Year. Workers of this factory have had to work extended hours on weekdays and Sundays, and the factory has not signed a contract on wages for the extended working hours.

These strikes have now ended thanks to efforts by the functional agencies in compromising with the owners of these companies, who agreed to comply with some of the workers' demands.

Australia

Australia: Government's Position on PRC-Taiwan Issue Viewed

BK1802105696 Sydney THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW in English 30 Jan 96 p 12

[Article by Brian Toohey: "Keating Backs The Bully in Chinese Neighbourhood"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Australian governments do not normally go into an election campaign with a policy of supporting a bullying communist giant against a small democratic country. The Keating government is not only doing so on this occasion, but its support for Communist China against Taiwan has widespread backing from the nation's opinion leaders.

For good measure, it is bucketing the United States for taking a more principled stand. After years of demanding that the United States stay "engaged" in Asia, the Keating government is now aghast at the prospect that engagement might actually mean telling China to keep its hands off Taiwan.

The process by which Taiwan is now seen as the villain is extraordinary, even by the standards of contemporary diplomacy in which language can be wrenched and twisted until it loses all meaning.

Recent changes mean that Taiwan deserves to be regarded as a fully fledged democracy while China remains a brutal dictatorship in which corrupt Communist Party factions jostle for supremacy. Yet Australian diplomacy has managed to paint the Taiwanese as the villains for daring to suggest that they don't want to be ruled by the mainland Communists.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Evans, warned last week that Taiwan would endanger regional security by asserting its independence. According to Evans, China would respond by attacking Taiwan.

By some amazing contortion, however, China's use of force would not be regarded as threatening regional security — the fault would lie with Taiwan for provoking the neighbourhood bully by doing something so unexceptional as expressing a preference for democracy.

At present, the internationally recognised position is that Taiwan is part of China. The reality, however, is that Taiwan has been effectively independent of mainland China for almost 100 years. The clear understanding behind international acceptance of the "One China" fiction is that the mainland should not try to assert control by force.

Given that the Taiwanese people are increasingly making it plain that they do not want to shift to Communist

rule, there is no realistic prospect that the mainland will be able to take control without the use of force.

This might change if the mainland were to become a democracy, but there are no signs that the Communist Party is about to relinquish power. Despite confident predictions to the contrary, the Communists have been able to introduce elements of a free market while still running what amounts to a police state.

At the weekend, the Chinese President, Jiang Zemin — who doubles as the Communist Party General Secretary — resorted to old-style Maoist language in promising to bring the "rebel province" of Taiwan to heel. Jiang said that the takeover of Hong Kong in 1997 was just the "first step of a long march" that would see Taiwan similarly incorporated.

The hopes of those who assumed Beijing would rule Hong Kong with an extremely light touch after 1997 now look like being dashed. Beijing has made it plain the people of Hong Kong will do what they are told or face the harsh consequences.

It is not a prospect that is likely to persuade the Taiwanese people to vote in favour of incorporation. If instead they opt for independence from the mainland, the international community will be hard pushed to mount a case that says they deserve to be invaded.

Nevertheless, the Keating government's position is that the Taiwanese should shut up and hope to be left alone. On present indications, however, there would seem to be little reason to doubt that Jiang means what he says in promising that the "long march" begun by Mao will end with Taiwan firmly under Beijing's thumb.

One way of trying to ensure this does not happen is for the US to stick with its policy of warning the Communists it will not tolerate a military attack on Taiwan. Keating and Evans, however, want the US to go softly on China while warning the Taiwanese to shut up and suppress any democratic inclination to declare their independence from Beijing.

A recent Foreign Affairs departmental document leaked to a Canberra journalist, David Lague, even complained that the democratic process in the United States meant that our closest ally was likely to support Taiwan militarily. Such a result would certainly mean the United States remained engaged in Asia, but not in the way intended by Keating and Evans.

As Keating put it in a recent interview, the United States has "not got the weights right" in its approach to China. According to Keating, the United States places too much weight on human rights issues and support for Taiwan.

In Keating's view, the most important thing about China is not that it is a Communist dictatorship but that it is the world's biggest emerging economy. Good relations should not be jeopardised by any prissy concerns about Taiwan's fate.

Keating's speeches about his "vision" of wanting Australia to become more enmeshed in Asia usually contain an obligatory line about how this does not mean we have to abandon our traditional democratic values.

His eagerness to dismiss the United States as naive for supporting Taiwan only demonstrates how far he is prepared to do so.

Australia: Senate President on BHP-Iran Gas Pipeline Deal

BK1802140296 Sydney *THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW* in English 7 Feb 96 p 21

[Report by Michael Gill and Stephen Ellis]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rarely have a few loose words of political self-promotion been so comprehensively ill-judged.

Labour's Michael Beahan, president of the Australian Senate, remained blissfully unaware yesterday of the damage he had done. And there can be little doubt that BHP's [Broken Hill Proprietary] predicament is his doing.

The current AUSTRALIA-ISRAEL REVIEW — in a long article built upon an interview with Senator Beahan said "both BHP and the Iranians were concerned about the D'Amato bill before the U.S. Congress and eager to finalise the agreement before its ratification".

U.S. Senator Alfonse D'Amato's fiercely worded letter to BHP chairman, Mr Brian Loton, said that "reports suggest that action on a potential deal between BHP and Iran on a gas pipeline to Pakistan is being rushed to be signed before the bill passes Congress in an effort to avoid sanctions".

The REVIEW article was published on February 1. Senator D'Amato's letter was dated February 5.

Yesterday, Senator Beahan told the AFR [AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW] that he was aware of the impending d'Amato bill and this had been a key factor in his actions.

"If there wasn't any signed up agreement by the time the U.S. bill goes ahead, it would be a problem...that's why it's important to get an umbrella agreement, at least, signed up by that date."

He said his official position had helped him gain access to senior Iranian ministers on behalf of BHP and "break the lodam".

"My status, which isn't very great here, is a bit higher overseas.

"My access to Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati and Minister Gholam Reza Aqazadeh-Kho'i meant that in this case I was able to break the logjam," he said.

"So my role is really as a facilitator. It's nice to be useful."

Senator Beahan said he had not contacted BHP to find out about the results of his efforts: "I haven't heard back from them so far. It has crossed my mind a couple of times to call them and find out.

"I wouldn't want to interfere, because it's pretty delicate."

The Senator conceded he was not an expert in the complexities of Middle East politics: "It's not a particular focus of mine, but I have visited both Israel and Jordan."

"I've got invitations to just about everywhere, usually from the speakers or presidents of the Parliament," he said.

Australia: Resistance Movement in Irian Jaya Viewed

BK1802154696 Sydney *THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW* in English 7 Feb 96 p 11

[Article by Greg Earl: "Irian Jaya Far From Free of Resistance Fighter"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The symbolism of Indonesian military power runs deeply through the country's vast easternmost province of Irian Jaya. Military camps dot the airport road into the capital of Jayapura in a way that drives home the frontier atmosphere of the territory which was the scene of Indonesia's final triumph over Dutch colonialism.

The town itself is built around Yos Sudarso Bay — renamed like so many parts of the province after military figures from the celebrated three-pronged Trikora campaign in the early 1960's.

Then little-known Major General Suharto perhaps best underlined the Indonesian passion for the task by naming his youngest son Hutomo Mandala Putra after the Mandala military command from which he oversaw the infiltration of the first Indonesian troops.

But as some of the country's elite special forces troops withdrew from the province this week after

an unsuccessful month-long hostage chase, the rather battered and neglected Monument Trikora in the centre of Jayapura might be a more appropriate symbol.

This time last year the then provincial army commander Major General Ketut Wirdhana made some widely reported comments writing off the 20-year-old Free Papua Movement (OPM) [Organisasi Papua Merdeka] as a security threat.

The general told a press conference with remarkably confident precision that the rebels had only 86 rifles between then and "half of the rifles may possibly not function properly". But a year later a dozen soldiers are facing court action over the deaths of native Irianese and the military has been forced to concede it has lost track of the OPM group still holding 13 hostages.

While Mr Suharto's son-in-law and special forces chief, General Prabowo Subianto, immediately took charge of the situation in early January in apparent expectation of a swift and successful operation the provincial commander is now in charge for what might be a long saga.

In the ensuing year the big U.S. mining company Freeport McMoran has been forced further into the spotlight over the development of its giant copper mine and Indonesia is facing growing international scrutiny over how it manages one of the world's most bountiful remaining wilderness areas.

The capture of 21 people, including seven foreigners, earlier in January is the most high-profile action by the OPM since attacks on the Freeport copper slurry pipeline in the late 1970's and some large demonstrations in major provincial towns in the late 1980's which resulted in mass arrests.

General Ketut's comments last year reflected an emerging perception in Indonesia that a combination of a tough military presence, better relations with Papua New Guinea [PNG] and an influx of non-Irianese drawn by development had put an end to the rebel threat.

But the past year has seen a series of events which has underlined the emergence of a new generation of resistance fighters.

While the resistance groups are united by the OPM's distinctive West Papua flag, observers say they are more fragmented than the East Timorese resistance and often motivated by more localised disputes over land.

Irianese sources say there are about six separate groups ranging from Biak Island in the north to the big transmigration area of Merauke in the south. But in the past year an Amungme native from near the Freeport mine, Kelly Kwalik, has emerged as a de facto leader,

particularly since four of his relatives disappeared after being questioned by the military early last year.

The hostages were originally taken by a resistance group from the Dani tribal area of the Baliem Valley. But in an indication of operational links between the regional groups, Kwalik is then reported to have taken control and successfully evaded the military.

In an indication of how long the group could hold out, two Indonesian schoolchildren were only released last week after being captured by OPM rebels and taken across the PNG border in November.

While there has been speculation the latest hostages could be moved towards the distant PNG border, it appears more likely that they will be moved south-west towards Kwalik's more familiar territory near the Freeport mine.

A source familiar with OPM activities told the FINANCIAL REVIEW in an interview last year: "It's not very clear what Kelly Kwalik has in mind but he knows what he is doing. He wants the international community to know people are dying."

The source said the Indonesian Human Rights Commission had been right to criticise the military for treating all unrest in Irian Jaya as the work of separatist rebels.

"There are some people who have their (OPM) ideology," he said.

"But many of the people believe that their claim (to land) is one of their rights as Indonesian citizens and people. We want our autonomy to our resources."

Any move by the hostage group towards Freeport's mine at Tembagapura would once again leave the company in a position where it could publicly appear to be involved in a dispute over which it has no control.

Freeport lost U.S. Government-funded political risk insurance late last year because of environmentalist lobbying, but is still planning to substantially upgrade production from the current 115,000 tonnes of ore a day.

Ironically, the 13 remaining hostages are mostly involved in internationally funded conservation projects in Irian Jaya which makes them the most influential international allies that the indigenous resistance groups will ever have.

The World Wildlife Fund [WWF] has a major presence in Irian Jaya with several major projects designed to conserve the natural biological diversity one project officer describes as: "Apart from Brazil, there is nowhere left in the world that remotely compares with it. Many people will want to come to Indonesia to fill in the (scientific) gaps."

With Indonesia requiring multilateral lender finance to fund its plans for industrial development in Irian Jaya, groups like the WWF are likely to play an increasingly important role in influencing how development proceeds. While the OPM has used the hostages to once again demand an independent West Papua, Jayapura's Catholic Bishop, Hermann Munninghoff, maintained in an interview last year: "The idea of a free Papua is disappearing and it is a good thing because it is not realistic. We are part of Indonesia and it is not changing."

But Bishop Munninghoff, who has been a strong critic of military abuses and involved in recent negotiations over the hostages, says the central government has not gone about integrating almost a quarter of Indonesia's landmass in the right way.

And he leaves little doubt where the first changes need to be made in the province that was an important stepping stone in Mr Suharto's rise up the military ranks: "If there is a good (army) commander, it is a very good situation for the people. But it is difficult for the army leaders to know everything and in some places there is real terror."

Australia: Telstra, Bellcore Sign MOU To Upgrade Communication Network

*BK1802140896 Sydney THE AUSTRALIAN
FINANCIAL REVIEW in English 6 Feb 96 p 3*

[Report by Helen Meredith]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Telstra unveiled plans yesterday to transform its \$4 billion [Australian dollar] cable-TV network into a full broadband system, carrying both telephony and entertainment services, that would match the capability of the rival Optus Vision system head on.

Telstra has recruited US telecommunications services company Bellcore to help merge its existing copper-wire telephony and optic-fibre coaxial cable-TV networks into a single system.

Addressing an international meeting of cable and broadband experts in Melbourne yesterday, chief executive Mr Frank Blount said his company had signed a memorandum of understanding [MOU] with Bellcore to jointly design new software that would manage a full service broadband communications network in Australia.

Telstra would also put out requests for tender this quarter for network equipment that would allow it to provide telephony over its hybrid fibre coaxial (HFC) system.

"The full-service network — designed around the enormous capacity of fibre to carry television data and voice

simultaneously is closer than any of us expected," Mr Blount said.

With rival Optus Vision already rolling out a full-service network, Telstra now plans to follow suit but must at the same time accommodate its vast existing infrastructure, including the legacy of cable and its FMO (future mode of operation) upgrade plan which is replacing analogue with digital switches across the country.

With the pressure now on it to move faster to broadband, Telstra went hunting in June last year for a partner to the project. It said yesterday this search had led to Bellcore, which had been found to have "the best fit".

Bellcore is an elite research house staffed by experts who previously worked for Bell Labs and AT&T. The vice-president of broadband service for Bellcore, Mr Duane Elmquist, said his company had run successful trials of suitable network software with the Southern New England telephone company using AT&T and ADC Telecommunications as its equipment suppliers.

The memorandum of understanding between Bellcore and Telstra covered the development of the network management support system — a full suite of software, the group managing director of Telstra, Mr Doug Campbell, said.

The partners were now entering into detailed designed software. Before the end of this year Telstra would start to deploy both software and hardware for a million-dollar trial.

Australia: Undersea Cable System Linking Asian Nations Commissioned

*BK1802140096 Sydney THE AUSTRALIAN
FINANCIAL REVIEW in English 8 Feb 96 p 28*

[Report by Helen Meredith]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Two Australian-built advanced fibre-optic undersea cable systems linking Thailand, Vietnam and Hong Kong, and China and Korea were commissioned yesterday, with carrier Telstra and its strategic partner Alcatel Australia taking part in the start-up of services on the new networks.

Both use advanced optical-fibre cabling built at Port Botany in Sydney by the Tasman Cable Company, a subsidiary of Alcatel.

In Melbourne yesterday, Alcatel Australia separately announced it had won a contract to supply Brazilian carrier CTBC with Australian-designed and built customer-access equipment to be installed in the suburbs of Sao Paulo.

The initial \$4 million [Australian dollars] agreement is expected to lead to further supply deals as Brazil's regional phone companies accelerate the expansion and upgrades of their networks.

The chief executive of Alcatel Australia, Mr Ron Spithill, and the chief executive officer of Telstra, Mr Frank Blount, and senior executive Mr Charlie Zoi were in Ho Chi Minh City yesterday for the launch of the TVH marine cable network which is owned by Telstra, the Communications Authority of Thailand, Vietnam Posts and Telecommunications and Hong Kong Telecom International, and which was built under a joint supply deal by Alcatel and Fujitsu.

Mr Spithill said a significant amount of the 3,400-kilometre system had required specially armoured cable because of the intense fishing operations in shallower water off the coast of Thailand and Vietnam.

The China-Korea system, valued at some \$50 million, similarly required protection against damage from fishing activity in the Yellow Sea between China and the South Korean peninsula.

Mr Spithill said Australian industry had played an important role in this project, providing the cast-iron shells designed to encase and protect the cable.

The cable was made at Alcatel's TCC plant at Port Botany and loaded directly onto cable ships lying in deep-sea moorings alongside the factory. It is Vietnam's first optical-fibre undersea cable. The capacity and speed of transmission made possible by the fibre has greatly boosted the telecommunications of all five Asian nations involved in the two projects.

Mr Spithill said Alcatel Australia had earned \$180 million in the export of cable from the Port Botany plant for the two undersea networks.

Port Botany was built originally to make optical-fibre cable for the Tasman-2 service linking Australia and New Zealand and has since manufactured similar high-capacity cable for the vast PacRim East and PacRim West networks.

Yesterday Alcatel Australia announced a new contract to supply Brazil with Australian-designed and made remote exchange technology for customer access built originally for Telstra under the brand name RIM which is now being marketed offshore.

Alcatel Australia already has a RIM service carrying traffic in China and, according to technical director Mr Bruce Jones, has attracted a high level of interest among other South American operators where the technology has been demonstrated recently.

Australia: New Zealand's Current Account Deficit Hits \$3.7 Billion

BK1802135396 Sydney THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW in English 8 Feb 96 p 46

[From the "The World in View" section]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] [passage omitted] New Zealand's current account deficit came to \$NZ3.7 billion in the 12 months ended the third quarter of 1995, widening from a deficit of \$NZ1.7 billion in the 12 months ended the third quarter of 1994.

In the 12 months ended September 30 1995, the agency noted that the current account deficit of \$NZ3.7 billion had reached 4.2 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP).

It said that this was the largest annual deficit compared with GDP since the fourth quarter of 1987, when it was 5 per cent of GDP.

The third quarter result compares with 3.9 per cent of GDP in the second quarter and 2.1 per cent of GDP in the third quarter a year earlier. [passage omitted]

Australia: Polls Show Opposition Leading Labor Party

BK2202021496 Sydney THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD in English 17 Feb 96

["Pollwatch" column by Milton Cockburn — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] For the first time since the election was called, the Labor Party gained some good news from the polls. Only one poll, mind you, but after a year of almost unrelieved gloom in opinion polls it could not have come at a better time for the Government.

The Bulletin Morgan Poll, published in THE BULLETIN on Wednesday, showed a jump in Labor's primary vote by three percentage points over the previous week and a similar jump in its two-party preferred vote.

This poll suggests the gap between the Coalition and Labor had shrunk to two percentage points — 51 per cent to 49 per cent — compared to an eight percentage point gap the previous weekend.

The Bulletin Morgan Poll of 1,017 voters was conducted by telephone on February 9-10 with a sampling error of around three per cent.

This trend in the Morgan Poll was not confirmed by the Herald-AGB McNair Poll, conducted on the same weekend and published in the HERALD on Monday. This found the two-party preferred vote was now 56 per cent to the Coalition and 44 per cent to Labor. This

was an increase in the gap by two percentage points compared to the previous weekend.

The Herald-AGB McNair Poll of 2,075 voters was conducted by telephone on February 9-11 and has a sampling error of around two per cent.

Nor did Newspoll, conducted over the same weekend and published in THE AUSTRALIAN on Tuesday, detect a swing to Labor. This found that after two weeks of campaigning the Coalition still led Labor by an eight percentage point gap in two-party preferred votes — 54 per cent to 46 per cent.

The Newspoll survey of 1,714 voters was conducted by telephone on February 9-11 with a sampling error of 2.4 per cent.

The first marginal seat polls were conducted this week and they also do not lend support to Morgan's interpretation that Labor is closing the gap on the Coalition.

Three Herald-AGB McNair Polls, two in NSW [New South Wales] and one in Victoria, have also brought bad news for Labor.

The polls for Parramatta, published in the HERALD yesterday, and Macquarie, published today, suggest the Government is likely to lose both seats. Macquarie is Labor's most marginal seat in NSW and Parramatta is its most marginal seat in Sydney.

The poll suggests the two-party preferred swing against Labor in Parramatta is nine per cent and in Macquarie it is four per cent. It is likely that Labor can peg back some of the lead in Parramatta before polling day but, even so, it is possible the Government could lose up to 10 seats in NSW.

Labor's hopes that it can pick up seats in Victoria to offset expected losses in NSW and Victoria now appear unlikely following the Herald-AGB McNair Poll in the Melbourne outer metropolitan seat of Isaacs published yesterday in the HERALD.

This shows a five per cent swing to the Liberal MP, Mr Rod Atkinson, suggesting he now has a good chance of holding on to his seat, despite the fact that the recent redistribution of electoral boundaries in Victoria gives it a notional Labor majority of four per cent.

These Herald-AGB McNair Polls in marginal seats survey 1,000 voters in each electorate by telephone. Each was conducted over two nights during this week — Parramatta on Monday and Tuesday and Macquarie on Wednesday and Thursday — and have a sampling error of 2.5 per cent. The polls found around one in 10 voters have still to make up their mind how to vote and that half of these are unlikely to do so until polling day.

Australia: Poll Shows Labor Party Under Threat in Queensland

BK2202022796 Sydney THE SYDNEY MORNING
HERALD in English 22 Feb 96

[Report by Milton Cockburn — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Federal Labor Government is in danger of losing up to nine seats in Queensland, according to polling conducted for THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD.

A loss of this magnitude in Queensland would be sufficient to wipe out the Keating Government's majority — even before losses in other States are taken into account.

Some of the Government's brightest talents are in danger of losing their seats. They include the Attorney-General, Mr Michael Lavarch, the Special Minister of State, Mr Gary Johns, and the chairman of the Caucus Economics Committee, Mr Wayne Swan, who was tipped to join the ministry after the election.

This pessimistic outlook for Labor follows a Herald-AGB McNair Poll in Mr Swan's Brisbane electorate of Lilley which shows him struggling to hold his seat.

The poll, conducted on Monday and Tuesday evenings, shows a 6 per cent swing to the Liberals and has the Liberal candidate, Ms Elizabeth Grace, level with Mr Swan on 50 per cent.

This suggests that the result in Lilley might be decided by a handful of votes, and will probably depend on which candidate has the stronger local campaign in the final two weeks.

Labor holds six seats in Queensland with a margin of less than 4 per cent, and three with margins of about 6 per cent.

If the 6 per cent swing detected in Lilley was uniform and maintained until polling day, Labor could lose up to nine seats in the State.

The Lilley poll follows similar Herald-AGB McNair polls in marginal seats in Sydney and Melbourne which have detected big swings against Labor in those cities. The polls are the most definitive survey of marginal seats in Australia.

The Lilley poll was conducted after the Liberal Party launch on Sunday and after Mr Howard made his slip on radio about details of his family tax package.

In the seat, which Mr Swan holds with a margin of 6.2 per cent, the poll found Mr Swan and Ms Grace equal on first preferences with 41 per cent, with 10 per cent of voters still to make up their minds.

After the "don't knows" are allocated in proportion to first-preference votes, the two are still tied on 46 per cent. After an allocation of preferences, they remain tied on 50 per cent.

However, Mr Swan will be encouraged by the fact that second preferences are running slightly in his favour. He also has a high profile in the electorate, with 55 per cent of voters able to name him as their local member — even though he has been in Parliament for only one term.

A large proportion of these voters also indicated that they were satisfied with his performance as a local member, with 59 per cent saying they approved, 14 per cent indicating disapproval and 27 per cent uncommitted.

The 10 per cent of undecided voters will also be of some comfort to Mr Swan. Forty per cent say they will make up their minds on the day of the election, 16 per cent say they will do so some time next week and 9 per cent say they will decide by the end of this week.

Australia: Labor Party's Chances of Avoiding Electoral Defeat Viewed

BK2202023896 Sydney THE AUSTRALIAN
FINANCIAL REVIEW in English 22 Feb 96

["Latest Polls" column by Geoff Lambert — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] If you coddle the opinion polls properly they do give you the right answers. In 1993, they accurately measured public opinion at election time and they probably are doing so again now.

If so, they carry very bad news for Paul Keating, because in the fourth week of the campaign, they say that John Howard could have a 44-seat majority.

But few pundits can bring themselves to pronounce a death sentence upon the ALP [Australian Labor Party] yet, due no doubt to its propensity to spring out of the coffin just as the dirt is being shovelled in.

A "poll of polls" compiled on a fortnightly basis since August 1992 produces a trend line which fits the result of the 1993 election almost perfectly.

Although no one poll mirrored the result exactly and although no poll was taken on the same day as the election, the interpolated polling figures predicted the election result to within 0.1 percentage points.

In this "poll of polls" each fortnightly figure has been averaged with those immediately before and after it. These tricks reduce errors due to small poll samples and fortnight-to-fortnight vagaries in opinion.

Not only are the polls accurate, they reveal an uncanny stability in public opinion. People are no longer changing their minds very quickly. For the two and a half years to April 1995, the polls followed a continuous roller-coaster. The weekly rate of change varied between 0.2 and 0.67 per cent. In the succeeding 10 months, there was no significant change at all. This remarkable stability has only begun to shift in the fourth week of intense campaigning.

Obviously, a large number of the respondents who answer the pollsters with a definite preference made up their minds a year ago and haven't shifted. The "don't knows" may upset this stability in the next 10 days, but probably not — they usually don't.

The current two-party-preferred [TPP] figures from the "poll-of-polls", sitting steadfastly on about 47 per cent for the ALP, may not stagger up to the magical 50 per cent level.

Polling figures vary greatly from State to State, but this can also be accounted for. By assuming that State swings are State-wide and not too patchy, we can subtract this uniform swing from the TPP of each seat "at risk". If the result is less than 50 per cent, that seat will be lost.

State-specific polling figures are less common and less reliable than Australia-wide ones because they are derived from smaller samples — but once again we can pool results, and they indicate a 27-seat loss on the current notional boundaries to produce a Howard majority of 44.

Will these figures hold? Two questions must be answered — will public opinion shift and can the ALP pull off another marginal seats miracle?

In 10 days, the maximum likely movement in an inter-election period would be 1 per cent. If the ALP could use the heat of an election campaign to boost this to 1.5 per cent, it could hold its losses to 20.

This improvement is nowhere near enough and emphasises that the peril for the ALP lies in the large number of marginals in the 0-4 per cent range. The apparently large shift this week may prove to be just another wobble.

A major complicating factor is the effect of targeted campaigns in individual seats, a skill for which the ALP is renowned. These campaigns can swing another 2 to 3 per cent of the vote and can have a major effect on the final seats outcome. If the ALP can induce a 3 per cent effect in the "savable" electorates of 52 to 55 per cent current TPP range, then it could rescue 14 seats.

This would reduce the seat loss to 13 — which is still not big enough for a Keating victory.

And, if the ALP can shift Australia-wide opinion by 1.5 percentage points and then add the icing of a miracle 14-seat marginals campaign, they may hold Howard to a gain of six seats and a virtual a dead heat. But this does not appear to be happening.

Australia: Economic Reforms, Openness on Coalition's Agenda Urged

BK2102005896 Sydney THE AUSTRALIAN
FINANCIAL REVIEW in English 29 Jan 96 p 14

[Editorial: "Economic Reform the Linchpin"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Australia's 11.5 million electors have a real task ahead. Not just on March 2, but during the coming month, when it is vital that they ensure the tactical ebbs and flows of the election campaign do not overshadow the substantive issues facing the country.

For the next government of Australia has to address some crucial issues, including industrial relations reform, implementing competition policy, taking steps towards a republic, setting the wharves to work competitively and reviewing tax policy.

The latter should involve changing the mix of direct and indirect taxes, and of PAYE [expansion unknown] and capital gains taxes, and declaring a halt to the boom in middle-class welfare while diminishing the disincentives to the risk-takers who make or break the country's future.

The Federal Government has given up on economic reform. It is a government long on rhetoric about national identity, about the republic, about "leadership", but short on content. It is a Government with attitude, a degree of managerial competence and, right now, little more.

And its task is to move beyond rhetoric during this campaign, to announce policy, to provide leadership where it is most needed — on economic reform.

The government talks often about how far Australia has moved in the 13 years since Labor came to power. And it is right; the country has changed remarkably, and largely for the better — though the progress came chiefly under the Hawke-Keating team, it must be added.

But every other country comparable to Australia has also been moving as fast or faster, and is still pushing on.

Mr Beazley yesterday described Mr Keating as "visionary, bruising and blunt". He would "bring home the bacon from the region around us". But he won't; politicians persist in overestimating themselves. It will be business that brings home the bacon produced by international economic success, and it will only do so if Australia provides a healthy, competitive environment for such success.

Economic reform is not a stage that is superseded by, say, constitutional or social reform: it is a continuing process. Governments that believe their main task is finished — and this one appears to be among them — are effectively asking to be put out of their misery.

There is, then, a sense that this is the time for a change. And Mr Howard is an experienced performer who has handled the politics of leadership well. He has not presented the Government with targets to hit.

But now, in the campaign proper, Australians will expect much more than political tactics. They will want to discover whether this will be a Liberal government like the others the country has experienced: reluctant to grapple with change in the first place, and then not competent at guiding through the system any changes they have conceded.

In fact, there has been no reformist Federal Liberal government since 1950, while Labor can claim three such administrations to its credit, those of Mr Whitlam, Mr Hawke and, to a lesser degree, Mr Keating.

It is only in the States that the Liberals have runs on the board for structural change. And despite the common Canberra assumptions that mere mentions of Mr Kennett and Mr Court could poison the Federal Liberals' campaign, in fact both premiers remain popular, primarily because they are reformers.

Sitting on its hands, pretending — or worse, intending — that it will do nothing very much, is hardly good enough for the Federal party.

The business community may think that Mr Howard has a hidden agenda. The AUSTRALIA FINANCIAL REVIEW hopes he does have one. But now is the time to disclose it; otherwise it is worthless.

Mr Howard's proposals yesterday to help small business — the key sector to generate employment — by cutting the compliance red tape, repealing the unfair Unfair Dismissals legislation, and reducing provisional tax from 8 per cent to 6 per cent were a start, but no more.

For the hard political truth is that hidden agendas do not win a mandate. And Mr Howard needs such a mandate to have a chance of pushing any agenda through the Senate, which he will not control.

He will also have to deal with a still-powerful and hostile union movement, which remains inextricably linked, through voting control, with his political opponents. If he intends to take the unions on, he needs to make sure everyone knows it.

It will provide Mr Howard with tremendous authority if he can go to the Senate, or to the unions, and say that he has made his reform program transparent, and that the people of Australia have voted for it.

The time for hiding for political reasons is over. Australia now needs to see whether the Coalition's agenda is the right one. There is no other compelling reason to change the faces in the Cabinet room.

Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea: Bougainville Separatists Ambush Patrol

*BK2202074196 Melbourne Radio Australia
in English 0500 GMT 22 Feb 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Three Papua New Guinea [PNG] policemen, a soldier, and a pro-government resistance fighter have been wounded in a rebel ambush in Bougainville. A surgeon at the PNG Army's field hospital in Arawa, Dr. (Gidian Kaninga), says the soldier and the resistance fighter received serious injuries in the ambush at the (Barama) section of the Arawa-Tunuru road. Both were flown out by helicopter and are reported to be in a stable condition.

The ambush occurred when a police vehicle and a military armored personnel carrier were returning to Loloho from Arawa after a patrol. It was the latest in a week of ambushes by Bougainville rebels in which one civilian was killed at (Sicorilla) on Tuesday and another

injured. The attacks were launched to coincide with a statement by rebel leader Joseph Kabui that the so-called Bougainville Interim Government hierarchy was intact and that it would continue to press for independence from PNG.

Vanuatu

Vanuatu: Premier Curtails Broadcasting on Political Crisis

*LD2102122096 Melbourne Radio Australia
in English 0800 GMT 21 Feb 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Vanuatu's political crisis has become further confused with the leaders of the opposition Unity Front and the breakaway faction of the ruling Union of Moderate Parties rejecting an announcement by Prime Minister Serge Vohor that he has cancelled his resignation. Donald Kalpokas and Amos Ndeng described Mr. Vohor's decision as totally irresponsible and a deliberate attempt to create a crisis and cause instability and confusion. They say that Mr. Vohor cannot change the agenda of parliament, which had been scheduled to meet on Friday [23 February] to elect a new prime minister.

Meanwhile, Mr. Vohor has ordered Radio Vanuatu not to broadcast any news items or interviews relating to his decision yesterday to revoke his resignation. The Pacific News Service [Pacnews] quotes sources as saying the ban is specifically targeted at news releases and interviews emanating from the acting speaker of parliament, Amos Bangabiti, and the attorney general, Oliver Saksak. Mr. Vohor says he is still prime minister and that the parliamentary session will only elect a new speaker.

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